

The Tain

by Mathurin Kerbusso

Long years ago there lived and died
A hero great in strength and pride.
Warrior to the Ulster king
And he could do most anything.
Now, many were his feats of skill
And bards sing of his glory still.
I shall humbly try to sing
The tale of mighty Cuchulainn.

Chorus

*Hai! The Hound of Ulster cried and
Hai! the foes of Ulster died
Hai! when'er Gae Bolga flew
Cuchulainn's aim was always true.*

Now as a child he would not play
And as a boy he ran away
To the king, his uncle's hall
If need be he would fight them all.
King Conchobor then he came to see,
Said, "Make a warrior of me.
I would be a Red Branch Knight,
For you and Ulster I would fight."

Ch.

Now her is how he first won fame
Setanta was our hero's name.
Came to Culann's house quite late;
A monster hound stood at the gate.
He slew the hound with boyhood ball
Then swore that he would guard that hall.
King Conchobor he laughed loud and long,
"The Hound of Culann you'll be called!"

Cathbad the Druid once did say
"A warrior who takes arms this day,
Tho life will be short as a song,
His deeds will be remembered long."
Cried Cuchulainn, "Bring arms to me,
A hero's what I choose to be.
I would die tomorrow brave,
Than live to fill forgotten grave."

Ch.

The Bull of Cooley, Queen Medb swore,
She'd have or she would go to war.
Four provinces of Ireland camp
Whilst men of Ulster lay in pain.
Cuchulainn suffered not their curse
So he would face the armies first.
Five heads he stuck upon a tree,
Said, "Die by scores or singly!"

He slew with spear and sling and sword
A thousand men there at that ford
From Summer's end to start of Spring.
That Winter he turned seventeen.
When Ulstermen could rise again,
Then rested mighty Cuchulainn.
Nine months alone he'd fought their war;
Medb's army, he'd killed half or more.

Chorus (twice)